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A D D R E S S

Delivered before the

DELTA PHI AND ATHENÆAN LITERARY

SOCIETIES OF NEWARK COLLEGE.

BY

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A D D R E S S .

GENTLEMEN OF THE DELTA PHI

AND ATHENÆAN LITERARY SOCIETIES :—

To you I am indebted for the invitation that procures me the honour of addressing this audience. To you, therefore, my thanks are due, and to you I sincerely offer them.

The letter by which your request was conveyed to me, contained no common place compliments. As I highly approve, I will endeavour to imitate your disregard of unmeaning forms, and will therefore spare you the usual enumeration of your speaker's disqualifications for the trust you have committed to him.

You have called me here in the hope that I might be useful to you. You do not therefore expect me to aim at your mere amusement. Indeed, what is usually meant by that word, deserves no place in a man's history after he has once put away childish things. The object of amusement is to extract the sting from idleness, and render sloth supportable. Its nature is to substitute *attention* for *reflection*, and thus to cheat the immortal mind of its only proper and nutritious food, which is the acquirement of truth.

Dissipation has been defined to be the art of forgetting God ! Amusement may be regarded with equal truth, as the art of starving the mind.

Believe me, gentlemen, I feel that it is no light matter to be your speaker to-day. I know the softening influence of scenes like these, and I know how readily at such times, permanent impressions may be stamped upon the heart.

I highly value the opportunity you have given me, of sowing here, the fruitful seed of thought. That the seed sown be pure and good, and that you receive and cherish it, may one

day be of great importance to you, and to them that love you, and even to the community in which you are to live.

I have found it difficult to select from the number of very interesting subjects that have presented themselves to my mind in view of this occasion, one more than others, suitable for the theme of the few remarks I am expected to make.

When I sat down to review the results of my experience and observation, in hope to draw from these sources, however limited, something that might be useful to you, imagination transported me to this hall. I stood before this audience. I saw these young men, the observed of all observers. The feelings, the dreams, and the sober realities of the occasion, rushed upon my mind with all the force of individuality, and in a moment I lived through all the particulars of this hour.

A college commencement has always been an affecting scene to me. Whoever looks deeper than the surface of things will find here, food for much reflection, and will meet demands for all the sympathies of his nature. How beautiful and tender are the emotions suggested by the mother's look of complete, unsuspecting happiness, as she gazes upon her manly boy! How do the deep fountains of affection, well up in unison with the almost unrestrained fondness of the sister, whose eyes sparkling with pride and gladness, are rivetted upon a brother's form! How many stern truths, and how much painful experience are shadowed forth in the grave, and anxious countenance of the father, whose careful thoughts, withdrawing themselves from the present, are busily anticipating the future history of his son? And then how strongly do the feelings of these respected men, (the Faculty) claim our regard and appeal to our sympathies. Perhaps among all the deep and varied emotions that stir in the bosoms of an audience like this, none are more ardent or more tender than those which struggle for utterance in the heart of the instructor.

The preceptor loves his pupil. Perhaps he has been employed for years in watching the development of that young mind, and in laboring to promoté its vigorous and healthy

expansion. He has anxiously sought to give those growing energies a direction and an impetus that might carry his charge over the breakers, and launch him safely upon the broad sea of life.

Of the true character of the pupil, so far as his character may be formed, the teacher only, of all interested in his welfare, has had opportunity to form a correct opinion, and of the probable course and destiny of the pupil, the teacher only can form a rational conjecture. Reluctantly he leads his charge to the threshold of active life, and commits him to its busy scenes. But his interest does not end here. The Spartan mother equipped her son and led him to the battle, then left him to the chances of the conflict. But from some near eminence she still watched the ebb and flow of victory, and amidst the rush of combatants ever kept her eye upon the white plume her own hands had placed in the helmet of her boy. So from the retirement of these halls, these friends of your youth will long mark your career amidst the perils and the high ennobling duties of life, and long as you bear unsullied on your brow, the pure white plume of virtue they have fastened there, so long will they feel honoured by your deeds, and reckon themselves rewarded for their cares.

The departure of a gallant ship for a distant shore is attended with thrilling interest. Unconsciously we invest the beautiful machine with the attributes of life, and as she rides joyously upon the gently heaving bosom of the waters, we feel an almost irrepressible desire to warn the unsuspecting bark of the treachery that lurks beneath those laughing waves. We sadly anticipate her long and lonely struggles with the sea; her fierce conflicts with the tempest, and her secret dangers in the sunken rock or unsuspected shore.

If we permit ourselves to be thus interested in a striking symbol, how should the reality affect us? The starting ship is but an emblem of youth—of these youth. Just accoutred for the voyage of life, to-day some of you launch upon the open waters. How are you provided for the way? Have you any determined port in prospect? Have you carefully studied the charts that experienced navigators have pre-

pared? Are you ready for the ordinary dangers and even the possible accidents of the voyage? Or will you carelessly spread your canvass to every wooing breeze; loiter upon every pleasant shore, and drift unresistingly with every current? Do you expect to escape without chart or compass or pilot, the dangers against which others have found it necessary to guard most anxiously, and to reach by accident the haven that others have gained only by great exertion?

The ship is but a very imperfect type of man. She may return from her voyage to the place whence she departed. Battered by the waves and worn by the winds she may at length make her way back to port. Her damage may be repaired and experience may enable her to escape in a second voyage, the errors and the dangers of the first. It is not thus with man. His departure is a final one. He never can retrace his course. He makes but one voyage.

Mr. Coleridge has remarked, that "truths of all others the most awful and interesting are too often considered as so true, that they lose all the power of truth and lie bed-ridden in the dormitory of the soul, side by side with the most despised and exploded errors."

Among these truths so universally admitted, and so little regarded by the mass of men, are those fundamental ones that relate to the nature and the object of life. There are but few men and very few young men who seek to understand their own being; its mode, its laws, its object and its destiny.

Most persons begin life without any determined aim or settled principles of action. They throw themselves heedlessly into the stream, careless of the tendency of the current; amuse themselves with bubbles, while they are rapidly hurried onward, and only put out their energies so far as may be necessary to keep pleasantly afloat.

The consequences of this general recklessness are every where visible in the unhappiness and the degradation of man.

If we could separate ourselves from all the associations that have grown up with us, and divesting ourselves of all prejudice, look upon society as for the first time, and make

up our judgment of things from facts alone, We should hardly persuade ourselves of the natural sanity of our race. How could the existence of reason be inferred from life perseveringly and confessedly irrational?

When we look out upon the world, we see man possessed of wonderful powers. We find him exerting those powers to subdue all things under him, and to press all other forces into his service. We see him every where working with herculean strength and energy. Here tearing up the bowels of the earth, and there plunging into the dark caverns of the sea; here bridging the ocean with fleets, and there hewing his pathway through the rock-ribbed mountain. Here one gathers a little down from the nest of a worm and weaves it into a bark to bear him above the clouds, and there another harnesses the fire to his chariot and outstrips the wind in his flight. Every where we meet with evidences of ingenuity, of power, of indefatigable industry, but at the same time all these appear in most instances to be directed by the wildest spirit of inconsistency.

When we inquire into the end of all this labour; when we ask, why do those busy crowds toil thus? What rest results from all this restlessness? What ease from all this pain? what ultimate good from all this exertion? And what profit has man for all his labour? Then we learn that all is vanity; a mere waste of existence; and that man with all his endowments, is a most ingenious and industrious madman.

This picture is dark, but its shades deepen fearfully when we reflect that for all this perversion of life, man is responsible. He is a madman without the impunity of madness. He is a voluntary madman and his madness is guilt.

If you think this view of life, as the many live, is fanciful or exaggerated, hear the affecting confession of the celebrated Chesterfield, when about to retire from the gay and busy scenes in which he had been so distinguished an actor.—In the bitterness of disappointment he declares “when I reflect upon what I have seen, what I have heard, and what I have done, I can hardly persuade myself that all that frivolous hurry, and bustle, and pleasure of the world had any reality.

But I look upon all that is past as one of those romantic dreams which opium commonly occasions, and I by no means desire to repeat the nauseous dose for the sake of the fugitive dream."

It is strange that men who exercise the utmost prudence and sagacity with regard to the external affairs of life, do not think it necessary to employ even common sense in the management of the vast concerns of their own spiritual nature. No man would undertake the direction of an intricate machine, unless he had first acquainted himself with its nature and the purposes intended to be accomplished by it. Yet no mechanism is so intricate as the human mind; nothing is so hard to understand as the human soul. The mighty engine within us will work on. Its progress may not be hindered for a moment. Whether we trouble ourselves to manage it or not, it still drives us onward with fearful speed.

The wise Constructor of the machine has not been unmindful of it. The same great Being who marked out a pathway for the sun, and "cut channels for the rivers among the rocks," has appointed a course for the human soul. He has given reason to direct its movements in the way he has assigned, but man wantonly blindfolds the engineer and abandons the engine to its own wild way. Surely the fabled Phæton who presumptuously undertook to guide the sun on his course, was but a faint type of Him who gives up his only treasure to be the sport of blind unbridled passion.

Life is a most precious gift. Men are found to cling to it though doomed to wear it out in dreary solitude or unrelenting pain,—and few, perhaps none, have voluntarily relinquished it. The arm of the suicide has been nerved, not by desire for extinction, but by the vain hope of changing his mode of being for the better.

Like other possessions, however, life varies in value with circumstances. It is true that it has an absolute or natural value which depends upon instinct, and is judged of by individual selfishness. Thus if a heathen ignorant of future accountability, and unconnected with society by ties of kin-

dred or friendship, was afflicted with continual pain without hope of remedy or mitigation, he would still love his life, and would estimate it more highly than he would that of the most happy and useful of his species. In the sense here indicated the lives of all men in all ages are equally important, and perhaps I might say, the lives of all brutes too, for they seem to appreciate existence as highly as we do.

But there is another and a far more correct method of estimating the value of life than by our instinctive desire to live.

If we have been born into this world merely for the purpose of being happy in it, then that life is most valuable which by its length or other circumstances secures to the possessor the greatest amount of enjoyment. If on the contrary, life is a mere infliction of misery, without any ultimate end or object, then it is negatively valuable in proportion to its brevity or other circumstances belonging to it, that tend to diminish its amount of suffering. If neither of these suppositions be true; if man is placed upon this earth neither for the purpose of being happy here, nor to the end that he may suffer, but if this life be preliminary to another and far more important mode of existence, and if the design of our present being be to secure our future happiness, then life is most valuable when had under circumstances most favourable to the accomplishment of the end desired.

The christian religion teaches that immediate happiness is not the end of our being. It shows that in our present condition we cannot be truly happy, and it declares the true business of life to be the preparation of our moral nature for happiness. It teaches us, too, that this world is a vast theatre where good and evil are struggling for the mastery. It shows us that we cannot be neutrals in the conflict, but that while we live we must swell the ranks of evil, and war against our race, or we must employ our energies in the glorious work of the regeneration of man. It narrows down the great duties of spiritual life to these two, to seek by all the means God has given us to restore our own moral nature, and to aid in the restoration of that of our fellow men.

If these be the true pursuits of life, and if life be valuable in proportion to the opportunities it affords for the accomplishment of these ends, then it is far more valuable now than it has ever been; for the man who is blessed with life, and especially with young life now, has received more in the gift of his being, than was bestowed in the boon of existence upon any who have preceded him.

If the *duration* of life be calculated upon correct principles, it will be found that our lives are very much protracted, even beyond the term of antediluvian longevity. We live longer, for we live more than the men before the flood. The revolutions of the ball on which we tread, together with the periodical indications of the grand horology of heaven, serve as valuable remembrancers of the lapse of the hours to which our physical structure is limited. They serve to measure the rate at which the animal machine runs down; to reckon the breathings and the pulsations by which we are less of life. But the soul has no such limits. When the eye shall cease to watch the sunlight and the shadows, and the ear shall be deaf to the iron voice that peals the knell of hours, the spirit shall yet endure with existence unabated by subtracted time. Its duration must not be measured by the daily journeying of worlds to dissolution, but by the number and importance of the acts performed by the intelligence.

This we hold to be the true method of computation in man's moral arithmetic; and if it be true, it is an animating reflection that however short may be the life of our earthly nature, we have it in our power to live long in the operations of our spirits.

The grand instrument by which the purposes of life are to be accomplished, is *knowledge*—without this, man is powerless for good. But by knowledge we do not mean the mere memory of facts. To be acquainted with the deeds and opinions of men, or with the laws of God's physical creation, or with the many languages of the babbling earth—all this is only learning—nor by *knowledge* do we mean the ability to apply this learning to the purposes of man's comfort or the increase of his strength. This is only science—knowledge is something more than all this. It is

acquired truth. It has to do not only with man's intelligence, but with his moral nature. It is for the acquisition of such knowledge as this, that learning and science are proper means, and unless they are applied to this purpose, these acquirements are worse than useless.

In the present day, knowledge is more generally diffused than it has ever been before, and the facilities for acquiring and for propagating it, are infinitely greater than any other generation has enjoyed. Hence you enter upon life with greater advantages, and consequently with greater responsibilities than any who have lived before you have enjoyed and borne.

You may have the benefit of the observation and experience of the generations that have lived before you. Nations have run through all the details of their history, to teach you knowledge of men. Millions have perished in war, to teach you the value of peace. Millions more have been destroyed by luxury and licentiousness, to demonstrate to you the necessity of temperance. Every receding age has left for you, its patterns to imitate and its examples to deter. Many have watched the workings of their own hearts and transcribed for you the biography of their own minds. The laws, the passions, and the habits of the human soul, are exhibited to you in the recorded acts of all manner of men, under all manner of circumstances. Time has been carefully taking moulds of human character that you may observe and learn. Minds of the first order have treasured up for you the elements of learning and science. Many have devoted tedious years to the demonstration of a few mathematical problems and physical truths, the aggregate of which you may obtain almost without effort. The wisest and the best, as well as the most ignorant and the worst, have in their labour and in their sloth, their virtue and their vice, been unconsciously living for you. In the history of the past you have a chart of the future—improved and amended from age to age. Almost as soon as you enter upon active life, you may come into possession of an inheritance of information gathered together by immense toil and patience and suffering. Young heirs are apt to for-

get the slow and laborious process by which estates are accumulated and to underrate the value of property which has cost them nothing. So we are prone to think lightly of the intellectual and moral legacy bequeathed us by our forefathers, and we often forget, that truths we learn easily, were originally obtained only by intense and fatiguing application.

When we carelessly consult the table of logarithms, we seldom remember how much we owe to the protracted labours of Napier. Yet the facility of calculation we enjoy was unknown to the best mathematicians that preceded him, and his powerful mind long grappled with difficulties that all had failed to overcome before he possessed himself of the secret which we may learn in an hour.

For thousands of years astronomers had watched the heavens. Night after night they had gazed into the starry arch, and noted the phenomena of siderial motion. Genius and patience and riches had long been lavished in endeavours to learn the laws by which the planetary revolutions are controlled. But genius and patience and riches failed to acquire the truth, until Copernicus and Newton read the secret of the skies; and now a child may learn from a toy book the truths so diligently sought and so long unknown.

In almost every department of science, similar advantages are your birth-right. So great is the difference between learning and being taught, that you may acquire more information in a day, than the most diligent student could once have learned in the most protracted life-time.

The philosophy of Lord Bacon has added vastly to the real value of life. That great man created the character of the remarkable age in which we live, an age which will not be succeeded by another. For whatever continuance of years may be allotted to the world's duration, there never can be another great era in the history of the human mind. Succeeding generations can but carry out the great principles of action already established in the prevalent philosophy of the Anglo Saxon race.

The philosophy of Bacon has been called the philosophy of fruit! Plato only taught his followers to dream; Epictetus taught his to suffer; Bacon taught men to act. The disciples of Plato took refuge in fancy from the painful realities of life. The stoic sullenly endured them. Bacon bade man stretch forth his hand and change them.

Mr. Macaulay thus strikingly compares the poverty of the ancient with the riches of the modern philosophy. "Suppose that Justinian when he closed the schools of Athens, had called on the last few sages who still haunted the portico, and lingered round the ancient plane trees, to show their title to public veneration. Suppose that he had said 'a thousand years have elapsed since in this city, Socrates posed Protagoras and Hippias; during these thousand years, a large proportion of the ablest men of every generation, has been employed in constant efforts to bring to perfection the philosophy which you teach: that philosophy has been munificently patronized by the powerful; its professors have been held in the highest esteem by the public; it has drawn to itself almost all the sap and vigour of the human intellect; and what has it effected? What profitable truth has it taught us which we should not equally have known without it? What has it enabled us to do which we should not have been equally able to do without it?' Such questions we suspect would have puzzled Simplicius and Isidore. Ask a follower of Bacon what his philosophy has effected for mankind, and his answer is ready. It has lengthened life; it has mitigated pain; it has extinguished diseases; it has increased the fertility of the soil; it has given new securities to the mariner; it has furnished new arms to the warrior; it has spanned great rivers and estuaries with bridges of form unknown to our fathers; it has guided the thunderbolt innocuously from heaven to earth; it has lighted up the night with the splendor of day; it has extended the range of the human vision; it has multiplied the power of the human muscles; it has accelerated motion; it has annihilated distance; it has facilitated intercourse; it has enabled man to descend to the depths of the sea; to soar into the air; to penetrate securely into the noxious recesses of the earth.

These are but a part of its fruits, and of its first fruits. For it is a philosophy which never rests, which has never attained it, which is never perfect. Its law is progress. A point which yesterday was invisible, is its goal to-day, and will be its starting post to-morrow."

Young Gentlemen—The fruits of this philosophy so far as they are yet matured are yours. You may gather them in the multiplied comforts of life—in all the enjoyments of the civilized mind—in the abundance of knowledge—in the ease of acquiring it—in the means of wielding it to purpose. A man's observation once was limited to the range of his vision, and his influence was scarcely felt beyond the sound of his voice. Your observation scans the world and your power over your fellow-men is no longer limited by the barriers that once shut in communities. You may communicate at one and the same time with millions speaking different tongues. Within a few days of their birth your thoughts may be influencing the inhabitants of the four quarters of the globe. An able article in a popular newspaper may operate powerfully upon the minds and destinies of men separated by the roll of oceans, and severed by language and religion: and the writer without leaving his closet, may do more in an hour, than Methuselah could have accomplished had he devoted his long slow life to the purpose.

It is not necessary now that a man shall occupy a conspicuous station in society in order to influence the multitude. Through the press, every man fitted to lead, has access to the crowds that follow. "The author's eye may never flash; his voice may not thunder; or his arm bear the avenging sword, yet the silent influence of his pen, like that of the moon upon the tumultuous sea, may be powerfully exerted to arouse the sleeping waves of human passion, or to lull them into peace."

Gentlemen—The modern facilities for the diffusion of thought are a very important part of your inheritance of power. The pen is a far more powerful instrument than the sword, and you should consider it a sacred duty to prepare yourselves to use it for the benefit of mankind.

You inherit from your fathers, another legacy that adds a value to your life which even civilization could not give. You are born free! You tread the earth with the consciousness that you have no superior but God. To Him only must you render homage, from Him only you need to solicit favour. You hold this noble country by a grant from the Creator's hand. He gave it to your fathers: you are his immediate tenants. He intends this country for his model land. Here he designs to exemplify the practicability of the principles he has laid down for man's moral and political government. Upon the heights of our majestic mountains he has lighted a beacon for the guidance of the nations, and he wills that every river that rolls through our valleys, and every wave that recedes from our boundless coast, shall bear away to other lands, the knowledge of a gospel that has power to renovate the soul and free the man. It has pleased God to make our country the nucleus of a free world. He has posted us in the Thermopylæ of moral action. Even now our example and our efforts have sapped the foundations of ignorance, and superstition, and wrong, and every day popular opinion is fixing its powerful lever more securely beneath the tottering structures. The stone from the mountain has smitten the feet of clay, and iron tyranny staggers to its fall. The heart of the freeman beats high in the opening prospect of a liberated world, and the christian, reading in the universal shaking of the nations the accomplishment of prophetic vision, bends all his energies to penetrate the rapidly hastening events, by which pure and undefiled religion shall be triumphantly established in the earth.

Gentlemen—When the shout of a ransomed world shall go up to heaven, shall ours be the joy to have stood in the front of the army of liberation? That post of honour is ours, will we retain it? Will we feel the preservation of our civil and religious liberty to be a sacred obligation? Will we hold our institutions as trustees for mankind? If we will, there is but one possible mode of preservation. We must imbue the minds of the great active mass with sound religious principles, and elevate together the intelligence and the morals of the people.

Gentlemen—The noble heritage of liberty, like the other gifts of God, was granted only to them that toiled for it. He only who has treasured up the sighs of the bereaved and the groans of the oppressed can estimate the price of its purchase. Tongue cannot tell what our liberty cost those noble men, the Puritans and the Presbyterians of Scotland. They battled for it in the field and bled for it on the scaffold: for it they dwelt in the caves of the earth and the dark places of the wilderness; for it they sacrificed their possessions and forfeited all the endearments of life; for it they were hunted like beasts and poured out their blood like water upon hill-side and valley; for it they lifted up their prayers from the clefts of the rocks and the hiding places in the hills to Him in whose arm they trusted for deliverance. He did deliver them, and these despised men set their feet upon the neck of kings, and laid a broad foundation for universal liberty. And when in after years their children renewed the struggle in this distant land of their refuge—they proved themselves worthy of their sires. With the same stern integrity, the same unerring sagacity, the same determination to be free, the same wisdom in council, and courage in the field, and above all, with the same unshaken reliance upon God, our fathers achieved their independence. They struggled on year after year, never desponding, never hesitating. They endured without complaint sufferings of which we cannot think without horror, and by privations and exertions new in the history of man, acquired that civil and religious liberty that we inherit. God forbid that we should think lightly of what has cost so much exertion, and so much pain to the noblest race of men the sun has looked upon. Let us value it as our dearest earthly treasure, and watch over it with all the vigilance that becomes the sons of those that earned it.

The plant that the noble Scotchmen planted, and our fathers shielded with their bosoms and watered with their blood, has grown to be a mighty tree—stretching forth its branches to the east and west and north and south, it invites the oppressed to find refuge in its shade. We are the guardians of the tree. Let us take care that the roots be not divided, and that no

foreign branches be engrafted on its stock. Let every American feel that he is invested with the right to see that the republic be not endangered. Depend upon it, if we are true to our trust and to Him in whom our fathers trusted, it will not be in the power of artifice, conspiracy, nor violence to wrest our birthright from us.

The present age is marked by an adroit and highly dangerous attempt to philosophize away all the power of revealed truth. Infidelity does not as formerly, boldly marshal its forces and rush recklessly upon the immovable bulwarks of our faith. We have no more to fear from the fierce assaults of unmasked scepticism; but we are threatened by a more subtle foe. The pure gold of christianity which only expanded under the rude hammer of ignorant violence, may readily lose all cohesion and fall to pieces, if permitted to be mingled with the base alloys of earth. Nothing has proved so detrimental to the pure and simple religion of the Bible, as its admixture with the miscalled philosophy of man, and perhaps since the early days of its propagation, it has never been more fearfully threatened with this unhallowed amalgamation than it is at present.

It is wonderful to observe what plain atheism and even downright heathenism is taught in Europe under the name of christianity. Neology, transcendentalism and eclecticism in the garb of religion have laboured hard to pull down the cross. In Germany and France, a self-styled philosophy has to a great extent superseded the plain revelation of God, and built up the long exploded dogmas of the Grecian schools upon the ruins of the Bible. These philosophers acknowledge no source of illumination but their own reason. Full of exaggerated conceptions of their own powers, and despising all rational limits to investigation, they have tortured reluctant nature for evidence against God, and having run through mazes of absurdity where all judgment was bewildered, they have involved themselves in a mist of idealism in which Plato himself might fear to tread. Despising all the lessons of experience, they give themselves up to contemplate the phantoms of the spectral world in which they dwell. Their unlawful fancy reaches even to the mind of the great Invisi-

ble; provides laws for the Creator, and ventures to define with mathematical precision, the process by which the supreme cause is compelled to originate existence. It is strange that such absurd extravagance and daring impiety should attain the dignity of opinion in any land. It is more strange that the plague of proud and lawless speculation should so soon destroy in lands professedly christian, the influence of that faith which only can comfort the heart and satisfy the soul of man. Yet there are heart-sickening indications that our own country is to be visited with this grim philosophy. In one of our influential seminaries its principles have already been promulgated. Our young men who owe all to the Bible, their intelligence, their dignity, their civil liberty, the endearments of home and the comforts of the fireside, they will be taught to despise the Bible; and with contempt for the oracles of God, will come the abandonment to fierce and beastly passion; the unbridled profligacy glorying in its shame; the grossness that even defies the brute propensities—all the fruits of atheism that Germany is now reaping. The precocious habits of mind, so characteristic of American youth; the mistaken independence of spirit that leads them to despise warning and reject restraint; these prepare them to be the ready prey of a system that appeals fiercely to the pride of the soul. May God avert the threatened calamity! May the true and rational piety of the country rush between the living and the dead and stay the plague!

Young Gentlemen—In order to do your duty to your country and to the world, you must learn and perform your duty to yourselves. You must turn your eye inward and study your own nature, and ascertain the means by which it may be elevated to purity. To know ourselves has long been considered the foundation of wisdom. Happily for us we have the clearest light to aid us in this inward investigation.

Man is a compound being: within a body so wonderfully made that God only can analyze and understand it, dwells a spirit, whose powers, little as we know of them, fill us with awe in the contemplation of ourselves. The curious physical structure with all its admirable contrivances and compli-

cated mechanism, is destined to decay. Day by day it is dying and soon it will be resolved into dust; but the spirit within is deathless as God.

In order to the preservation of human life, certain propensities are interwoven with our animal nature. As the body is but the temporary dwelling-place of the spirit, these propensities are the tools by which the house may for a time be kept in repair. To indulge these animal desires cannot be the end of our being. It is incredible that the soul was made immortal for the purpose of ornamenting and repairing a house that after a while must crumble away. Indeed if the mere gratification of our animal nature be the end of our being, then we are worse provided than the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air. Even the polypus, clinging to its rock, satisfies its wants more fully, more certainly, and with far less painful exertion than man can do. It is incredible that an immortal mind can have been made to be the slave of a mortal body. The body must have been made for the temporary use of the mind. For what use then was it made?

It is evident to every one that looks into the busy operations of his own mind, that his spirit is under restraint, and that it is compelled by some mysterious power to dwell in the body. When the spirit gazing into the glorious vault of heaven, glows with rapturous emotion, and longs to spurn the earth and seek a purer and wider sphere, the heavy body loads it down: when it would bring all the mighty energies of intellect to bear vehemently upon some subject of thought, the body wearies and the exertion cannot be long continued: when it would throw its glance beyond the sphere of material light, or deep into the hidden secrets of the earth, the eye is impotent: when it would commune with the kindred intelligences that throng the earth unseen, the dull ear conveys no ethereal sounds. Often the quailing heart and the tottering knee, and the feeble muscles, refuse to do the spirit's bidding. On every side its action is repressed and limited. The spirit cannot escape the earth. It must drudge through all the petty details of mortal life.

Why are these things so? Can infidelity tell us why? Can atheism explain by what irresistible power the soul is thus tied down to matter? Can man's philosophy unravel the

mystery of this incongruous union? And for what purpose are these things so? Is there a wise end to be accomplished by the soul's imprisonment, or has some malignant fate confined the spirit in this tenement of clay, that like an imprisoned eagle, it may restlessly spring from side to side and beat its wings against the bars of its cage? Is human life but immortality in chains, or is it immortality in the cradle?

Infidelity has no reply to make. Atheism sneers at the question, and bids men writhe and groan "like dumb beasts in pain," ignorant of all but suffering.

Christianity only can solve the mystery. From it we learn that the same hand that presses down the reluctant ocean in its bed, and upholds the mountains in their sockets, has enclosed the mighty spirit in its earthen house. He placed it there that it might be educated and trained up for duties and enjoyments of eternal duration. To every one of us He has entrusted the preparation of an immortal spirit for eternity. Its unalterable destiny depends upon the fidelity with which we perform the trust. In a few days the soul will be permitted to burst the walls of its shattered prison-house. Then it will bear with it high up to the throne of the Beneficent, or far away into the darkness of immortal death, a consciousness of identity, an entire oneness of history and interest with him who shall have fixed its eternal state.

The body is intended to be the instrument by which the education of the soul may be effected. By it the spirit is brought into relation to matter, confined to place, made to regulate its movements by time, and brought to act upon material nature. We have said that the propensities are the tools by which the mind keeps its earthly house in tenable condition. Now just as by the use of tools men may be made acquainted with their own strength or weakness, and as by their use the body may be invigorated, so by the management of the animal propensities the mind may learn its own condition and increase its strength.

As we are constituted we can have no knowledge of the mind but by its acts. The spirit seems to have no passive sensation as the body has. If any organ of my body be in a healthy condition, I know it; it feels well. It is not so with the mind. I cannot judge of its health but by observing its

action in view of known rules of right. The spirit seems only to know itself by interpreting its own acts and thoughts which indeed are acts.

Now here is the key to the mystery of human life. It is the intention of the Divine Being in all that through his will affects us here, to make us acquainted with ourselves, and to give us opportunity for moral education. It is, therefore, a capital blunder to suppose that the daily business of active life is opposed to the care of the mind. To retire from society in order to improve the heart, is to retire from school in order to be taught. It is true that when free from irritating causes men may be free from irritation, but this no more proves the absence of irritability, than the stillness of the sea in a calm, proves that its waters have lost the power of motion and could not be ruffled by the wind.

As no man can tell what is his deficiency until he is tried, nor the precise quality and amount of training he requires, he cannot superintend his own education. To be able to do so, would presume knowledge already perfect. He must therefore submit to the arrangements of the all-wise Being. Let no man waste his time in vain wishes for another station, or other circumstances in life, in the hope that these would be more conducive to his moral welfare than the present. But let every one believe that there are lessons to be learned from the circumstances around him, and let him set himself diligently to acquire those lessons.

The man who regulates his conduct by the teachings of true philosophy, will tread a path leading to happiness through laborious and persevering, yet highly exhilarating effort. To him no day can pass tediously. Ennui, the rust of existence, cannot corrode the mind thus earnestly and happily employed. To such a man life loses all its terrors. He is neither intoxicated with its hopes nor troubled with its fears. Having no vain desire to be independent of God, he does not join in the common struggle for wealth. If prosperous, he seeks to employ his means and his influence, in cultivating kindly feelings towards his fellow-men: in strengthening into habit the benevolent desires of his heart, by increasing the happiness of all around him. Should his moral nature require to be moulded by a sterner disciplinarian, a sharp reverse encoun-

ters him. Riches fly away; adversity undertakes his case. The true philosopher sees nothing in this to disturb his peace. He knows, as did the Israelites of old, that his God is Lord of the valleys as well as of the hills, and he sets himself to extract from poverty as much true riches as he can. No want of mere externals can make him poor. His wealth does not consist in flocks and herds; he does not estimate his possessions by gold, nor measure his worth by acres. God has wrought within him an imperishable store-house, and there he deposits his treasures. He has the true philosopher's stone, every thing that he touches turns to gold. Disappointment bears to him on her icy wing the gem that is more precious than rubies, and from the iron hand of affliction he takes the bitter draught that invigorates his soul.

If we walk in darkness we may be continually frightened by strange shapes, and bewildered by illusive appearances, but the light shows us useful and pleasant things in the very objects of our terror. So in life, we may see every thing in disguise, and may waste our strength in alternately fleeing and chasing phantoms; but by the aid of enlightened reflection we may discover truth and find gratification in all that we encounter.

If we differ from the brutes, it is in the faculty of reflection. If we do not use this faculty, how are we better than they? If we pervert it to beastly purposes how much baser are we than the brutes.

If we have been created merely to perform our six days labour; if the farmer is born but to till, and the laborer to dig, and the mechanic to construct, and the professional man to plod his weary round of mental pain, then of all God's creatures we are the most miserable, for we only are fully qualified to appreciate our misery. But if we are born for the nobler purpose of educating our spirits by coporeal endurance, why do we stand idle with the key to knowledge in our hands? Why do we not open and read the enigmas in which wisdom lies concealed?

By the talismanic power of reflection we may draw the elements of spiritual excellence from the veriest trifles of life. Man need not toil as the brute toils, finding no employment for his mind in the labour of his body; but as a celebrated

man has remarked, he "may draw from the fleeting facts of his worldly trade, art, or profession, a science permanent as his immortal soul and make even these subsidiary, and preparative of the reception of spiritual truth."

One of the greatest hindrances to correct life is this ; that men suffer themselves to believe that their thoughts need no control. They admit that their words and actions require restraint, but they think that the imaginations and emotions of their hearts may be suffered to run riot with impunity. This is a fearful mistake ; it has wrought dreadful ruin.

It is so far from true, that thoughts are of secondary importance compared with actions, that on the contrary actions are virtuous or vicious, only as they are the interpreters of thought. The thoughts are the deeds of the soul, and by them is the character determined. A man's actions are but the hands on the dial—the important machinery all lies within.

It is almost incredible to what extent the mind may be corrupted, while the outward life continues unexceptionable and the morals unsuspected. The grass may be green and the flowers may flourish, while all, beneath is rottenness. So the external man may wear an appearance of virtue while the whole spiritual man is corrupt. But this deception cannot be long continued. The smothered fires will at length break out, and then the flame is often fierce in proportion to the previous restraint. We often see a man who has long maintained the most respectable standing in society, suddenly plunge from apparently the highest pinnacle of virtue, into the deepest abyss of vice. The world astonished, wonders how one so pure could thus instantaneously pass over all the intermediate degrees of wickedness, and attain by a single act a depth of infamy that is usually only reached in years of progressive crime. The thing is easily explained. The man's mind had gradually been polluted. His imagination had long rioted in vice. The world within him had been industriously stored with glowing images of the forbidden fruits which he longed to taste, yet dared not openly enjoy. Appetite perpetually irritated had struggled fiercely with conscience. The monitor was overcome and gagged. The will consented, and then there remained nothing between the uproused passions and their prey. Pride, or fear, or interest, for a while restrained

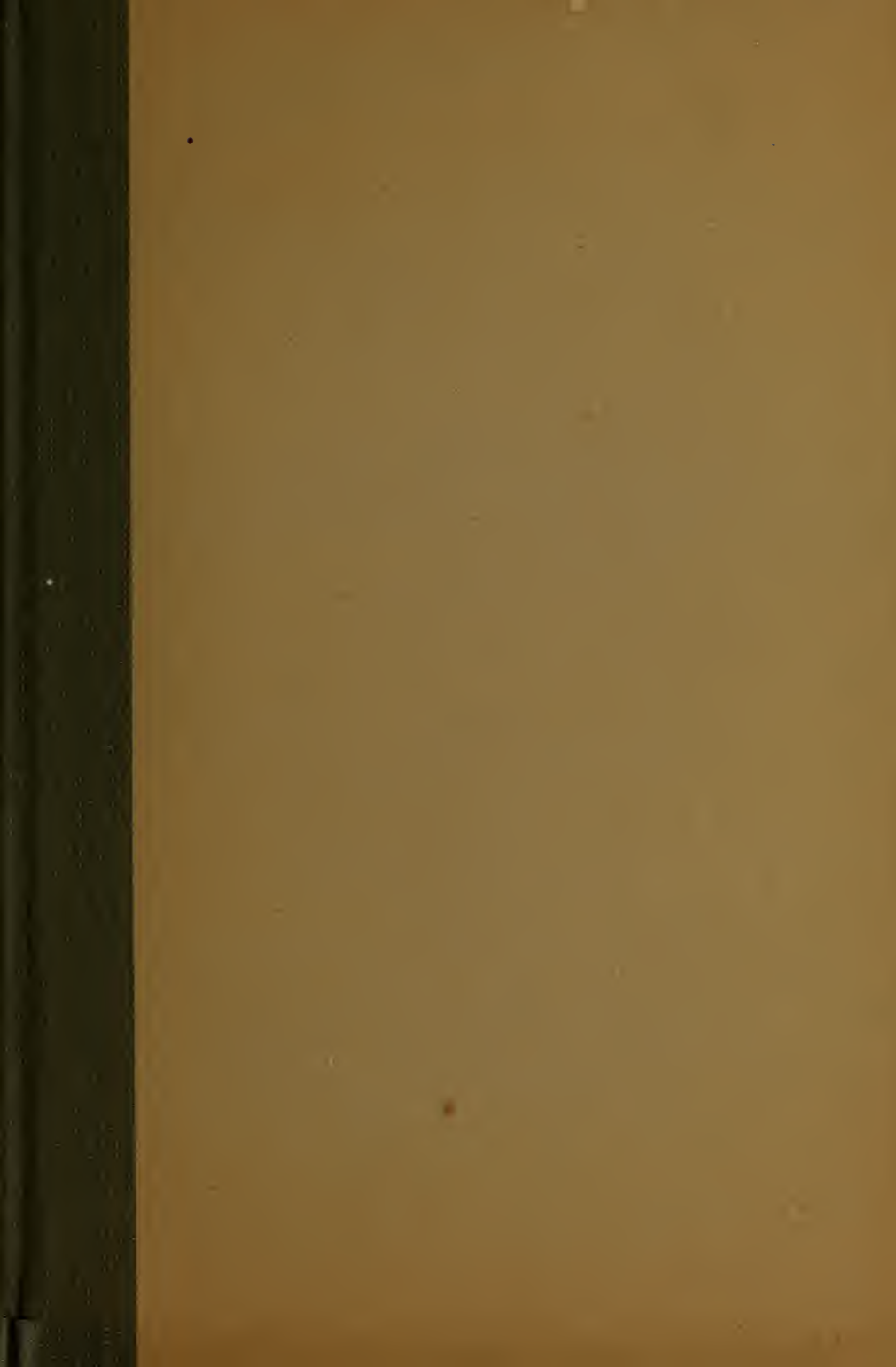
open indulgence; but in a moment of strong temptation these considerations gave way, and the man sprang forth a full grown villain at a bound.

By far the greatest difficulty in the way of an honest man, who sincerely desires to accomplish the end of his being, is the subjection of his own thoughts. The very atmosphere is full of poison. Evil suggestions swarm like Pharaoh's plague of flies. They find their way into our closets, and infest our firesides, and beset us in our daily business. They are ever pouring upon the mind through all the avenues of sense. Nothing but the most immediate and determined resistance can prevent the seeds of evil from germinating in the heart; and when they have taken root, nothing under heaven grows so fast. With every moment's sufferance they strike their roots deeper and stand firmer.

We cannot be too careful to exclude evil from our thoughts. The man who for a single moment cherishes a foul suggestion, *plants it*.

Young Gentlemen—Never permit yourself to think, that which it would be shameful for you to speak; never suffer your fancy to dwell upon deeds you would scorn to do. If there were no other danger in such license there is this, that you can never obliterate from your memory the thoughts you have once indulged. You may forget them; but passing events as they breathe upon the tablet of memory, will again and again painfully revive the long forgotten lines of thought. Perception and fancy are the cameras obscuras of the mind; they are ever presenting images which the first consent of the will daguerreotypes upon the recollection. Permit me to make one remark more.

The first discovery a man makes when he attempts to regulate his thoughts and outward conduct upon the principles we have inculcated, is that his mind is unequal to the task. He finds his moral nature in ruins and as utterly unable to renovate itself as is the fallen temple to rear up its prostrate pillars, or reconstruct its broken arch. If he endeavours to strengthen his palsied energies by external associations, they bring but little aid—and he must mourn hopelessly over the desolation of his immortal mind, until he seeks from the God that made it, the power of renovation.



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